United Nations S/PV.7176

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7176th meeting
Thursday, 15 May 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Oh Joon	(Republic of Korea)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. De Antueno
	Australia	Ms. King
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Gálvez
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein
	Lithuania	Mrs. Kazragienė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Tatham
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Letter dated 2 May 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/314)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-33212 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Letter dated 2 May 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/314)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Ioannis Vrailas, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/314, which contains a letter dated 2 May 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the forty-fifth report of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I now give the floor to Mr. Inzko.

Mr. Inzko: As we stand ready to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War and the tragic loss of life and suffering that followed, our continued commitment to our shared goal of irreversible peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina is more important than ever. Our continued commitment is important to the country, its people and the wider region, but it is also important for the affirmation of the inviolable values and principles of peace, coexistence, mutual respect and the sanctity of sovereign States that we hold so dear.

If ever there was a year for us to learn from the mistakes of the past and to remind ourselves that what happens to Bosnia and Herzegovina is important far beyond its borders, that year is 2014. It is precisely because of this that I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for the French-led efforts to mark the hundredth anniversary of the First World War in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which I hope will be used not to promote division and conflict but to reflect on the importance of peace.

(*spoke in French*)

I especially want to thank France and its Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Roland Gilles, for his positive and visionary approach to commemorating the centenary of the Sarajevo assassination. In this context, I welcome the initiative taken by France and its centennial mission, which has devoted great energy to sending a message from Sarajevo built around the theme of reconciliation. On the initiative of France, we shall together send a message of brotherhood and peace to the world on 28 June. This noble message will be reinforced by the concert for peace to be given in Sarajevo by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra that same day.

(*spoke in English*)

Sadly, in the six months that have elapsed since I was last here, the actions and behaviour of some of Bosnia and Herzegovina's elected officials and political leaders suggest that they have learned little from the mistakes of the past. The same old mistake — putting the interests of a privileged political class before those of the country and its citizens — continues to be made. Not once, not twice but over and over again. I say this because the status quo and the current way of doing politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina are so very clearly working for just a chosen few — those who are in power or close to power.

Conversely, it is simply not working for the average citizen in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The lack of urgency to reach the healthy compromises that are in the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people of the country and are clearly necessary to take the country forward is becoming ever more difficult to understand and impossible to defend. Entirely predictably, the political situation has continued to deteriorate. A snapshot of the past six months tells us all we need to know.

First, progress on Euro-Atlantic integration has ground to a halt despite the commendable efforts of the European Union and NATO. What is the reason?

Yet again, Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leaders were unable to reach an agreement on changes that are required to implement the European Court of Human Rights judgement in the *Sejdic-Finci* case, which is a condition for the country to move forward towards European Union candidacy and ensure the equality of all citizens. Similarly, a lack of progress on military property continues to prevent Bosnia and Herzegovina from activating its membership action plan with NATO.

Secondly, despite notable increases in exports, the overall economic situation remains very difficult, with the entities relying on external budgetary support to pay the bills. Unemployment now stands at 44 per cent.

Thirdly, the legislative output of the State institutions continues to fall well short of the needs of the country, with more new laws being rejected than are adopted.

Fourthly, many verdicts of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court, which are final and binding under the terms of the Peace Agreement, remain unimplemented. As a result, for example, voters in Mostar continued to be denied the right to elect their local Government, which should have happened in 2012.

And as if all this were not enough, challenges to the Peace Agreement became ever more frequent and direct as the reporting period progressed. Senior politicians from Republika Srpska have sought to exploit the deeply worrying events in Ukraine to promote their own separatist agendas, and have repeatedly called for and predicted the end of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Calls for a referendum on secession have similarly been repeated time and time again.

I have made it clear repeatedly that the Dayton Peace Agreement does not allow for the entities to secede. The international community must continue to say clearly that our commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina is absolute. That is exactly what the 28 Foreign Ministers of the European Union did in April.

Regrettably, I am obliged to inform the Council that once again the challenges to the Peace Agreement in the reporting period included not only statements, but also actions. In April, the Republika Srpska Government, at entity level, adopted Government decisions to regulate issues related to residence in response to the blockage of amendments to the State-level law in the upper house of the State Parliament. However, residence is regulated by the State in all countries of the world and it must continue to be regulated by the State, not at the entity level. As the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board has long made clear, we cannot have the entities taking unilateral action in this way.

Unfortunately we also saw the Federation entity authorities acting unilaterally last year in a way that compromised the single economic space of the country, although thankfully that issue is now moving towards a solution. I also regret to inform the Council that the Republika Srpska authorities continue to refuse to cooperate with me and my Office, as required under annex X of the Peace Agreement, by refusing to provide documents when they are requested to do so. The President of the Republika Srpska has boasted publicly that there would be no cooperation with my Office.

Sadly, positive developments have been few and far between, but there have been some. The State Parliament finally managed to adopt the necessary technical amendments to enable elections to be held as required in October. It also adopted a welcome new law on public procurement in line with European Union standards, and there have been important steps taken towards the full establishment and functioning of the Federation's Constitutional Court. There has also been some welcome progress with the State-level electricity transmission company TRANSCO. Furthermore, as I mentioned earlier, the fact that exports increased last year by 7 per cent is welcome news.

The regional situation and relations between the country and its neighbours also continue to improve. In this regard, Serbian Prime Minister Vučić's groundbreaking and confidence-building visit to Sarajevo two days ago was another significant and indeed welcome step towards reconciliation.

Nevertheless, I am increasingly concerned that the country is in danger of falling into a vicious downward cycle of spiteful tit-for-tat politics that it will be difficult to emerge from. Bosnia and Herzegovina has now been on a downward trajectory ever since the April package of constitutional changes was narrowly rejected in 2006. Eight years is a long time for a country to be going the wrong way. As my Office has long warned, the country cannot continue to go on in this way indefinitely without serious consequences.

While nobody could predict exactly when there would be a public backlash against the ongoing failure

of politicians to put citizens first, it was only a matter of time before it occurred. That is what took place at the beginning of February, when we saw large-scale protests. Central to the demands of the protesters was that the authorities should finally get serious about dealing with the mounting economic and social problems facing ordinary people and the rampant corruption gripping the country. Regrettably, the protests turned briefly violent on 7 February and significant damage was done to a number of public buildings in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zenica and Mostar, with notable numbers of police officers and some demonstrators being injured, but thankfully without any loss of life. Peaceful protests continued thereafter, including some in Republika Srpska.

The response of the political class was mixed. While some politicians understood the clear message of those protesting, others sought to misrepresent the protests as ethnically motivated or organized from outside the country. That was simply not the case. Democracy is not just a matter of holding elections every four years, it also happens in between. In that respect, the peaceful protests and civic gatherings known as plenums represent a positive step forward in strengthening Bosnia and Herzegovina's democracy. That new civic engagement is in a sense a sapling and, as we all know, even the tallest of oaks has to start to grow somewhere. What is now required is for the sapling to be nurtured and supported by us for as long as it takes. In this election year, it is especially important that the growth in activism continue in the form of greater participation in all aspects of the election process, from the selection of candidates to discussions of concrete issues to voting on election day.

We are now less than five months from the next general elections, which I believe will be the most hotly contested elections since the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed in 1995. I cannot hide my concern about the challenges that face us before election day. I am particularly concerned that in the coming months the ongoing controversy over residency and voting rights could lead to disputes on the ground, especially in municipalities across the Republika Srpska. That is a scenario that all involved must do everything in their power to avoid. It is especially important that no one be discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity or because they are returnees. I am similarly concerned that the election campaign will once again be dominated by attempts to raise inter-ethnic tensions as a means to divert attention from the real problems facing the country.

What Bosnia and Herzegovina badly needs to see in the forthcoming election campaign is a frank, robust and action-oriented public debate on how rampant corruption, exceedingly high unemployment and, of course, the lack of progress on Euro-Atlantic integration are going to be urgently overcome by the incoming Government after the elections. We need to hear more about plans to reform the economy and create jobs, which are in the vital interests of all citizens of the country regardless of ethnic group.

The demonstrations we have seen are a clear wake-up call for the political establishment in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also for the international community. As one of my predecessors pointed out recently, if we go on doing what we are doing we will go on getting what we are getting. After the next elections, therefore, there is going to have to be a fundamental change in the way politics is conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina so as to focus on the needs of all citizens, not just on the appetites of a chosen few.

Similarly, the international community's approach will need to evolve, and it must do more to factor in the specificities of Bosnia and Herzegovina's history, its post-war settlement and the risks to its future stability. With that in mind, let me take this opportunity to express my very strong support for the robust policy direction laid out by the Foreign Ministers of the European Union in their conclusions of 14 April, which I have already mentioned. I should also like to highlight the excellent cooperation and coordination that exists between European Union Representative Peter Sørensen and me, as well as between our offices on the ground.

Clearly, our job in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not yet complete. This is the time to reaffirm our vision of a united and reintegrated Bosnia and Herzegovina that is the lynchpin of a peaceful and prosperous region. This is the time to regroup and to recalibrate our approach. This is the time to stand together united in support of the values and principles I spoke about at the beginning of my statement. That means supporting those within the country who are ready to work together to reach the healthy compromises that are necessary to take the country forward. It means that we must stand firm against those who seek to sow division and disintegration. And it also means that we re-examine our approach while preserving the tools

that have ensured the peace, including the European Union military mission with an executive mandate.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has come a long way since 1995, but there is still some way to go. Let us make sure that we continue to give the country the support it still needs to complete its long journey to lasting peace and stability.

The President: I thank Mr. Inzko for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to welcome Mr. Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, once again, we must note that his report (S/2014/314, annex), which we have studied carefully, reveals a trend with regard to Bosnian Serbs, that is, they are blamed for all the political ills in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a downplaying of the adverse impact of the Muslim Croatian clashes in the country and an ongoing denial of the legitimate rights of Bosnian Croatians under the Dayton Agreement. We reject that unilateral and harsh approach. In order to have an objective pictu e of what is taking place in the country, we would recommend that Council members also read the eleventh report of the Republic of Serbia to the Secretary-General and the Security Council, in which the commitment of Bosnian Serbs to international law and the letter of Dayton is clear.

We call on the High Representative to act consistent with the "5+2" programme agreed in 2008 by the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, which sets out conditions for drawing down the protectorate in Bosnia an Herzegovina. Unresolved problems in that regard, as well as other fundamental questions for the future of the country, should be resolved by Bosnians themselves through inclusive dialogue and on the basis of the consent of all constituent peoples. The task of the High Representative is to promote those efforts and find common denominators, not focus on a Euro-Atlantic agenda, domestic affairs or the country's decisions on international affairs.

We agree with the appropriateness of improving the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina in accordance with the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in the *Sejdić-Finzi* case. A compromise decision on that issue is possible if it is arrived at in an inclusively manner. However, we cannot agree with the broad interpretation of the Court's ruling in an attempt to use it as a pretext to reopen the question of the entire Dayton structure. We note that, in contrast with the well-articulated position of the Republika Srpska on the issue, to date representatives of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been unable to agree on a single approach — mainly owing to the unwillingness to take into account the legitimate interests of Bosnian Croats.

We are closely following developments in the domestic political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is of course being impacted increasingly by the general elections scheduled for October. At the same time, see no reason for dramatizing the situation, as the report of the High Representative does.

There are concerns about the situation in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the High Representative for some reason does not dwell on that and instead focuses his main criticism on Banja Luka. Moreover, when protests arose in February 2014 in Bosnian-populated areas of the country — some of which resulted in violence, including the seizing and burning of administrative buildings and the forced resignation of cantonal authorities — the High Representative shifted the blame to the Republika Srpska and Croatians. It has to be acknowledged that Serbian entities are essentially free of social unrest. That is due to the active cooperation between the Government, unions and employers, as well as the timely, successful measures taken to resolve business issues and encourage the private sector.

The mass protests that took place in February were a manifestation of the far-reaching crisis in the Muslim Croatian entities. While the unrest was due to the worsening socioeconomic situation, the main reason goes far deeper: the absence of a balanced multi-ethnic policy at the federal level, ignoring the legitimate rights of Croatians and the failure to resolve ongoing tensions among the main Bosnian parties. All of that has an adverse impact not just on the Federation, but also the whole country. We are convinced that the usefulness of external supervision of the situation, along the lines of the Office of the High Representative, has run its course. The crisis in the Federation is just an additional argument for the need to draw down the personnel and for an inclusive internal dialogue to resolve the country's problems. There is no need to create artificial reasons to retain the apparatus.

Unfortunately, the High Representative was again silent concerning the alarming fact that members of the military opposition in Syria are being helped by mercenaries who are citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which potentially threatens stability in that country and region. Here we welcome the efforts of Sarajevo to strengthen criminal accountability for fighters and illegal armed groups outside the country and their accomplices.

Overall, since the devastating armed conflict ended in 1995, Bosnia and Herzegovina has achieved concrete results. I do not agree with Mr. Inzko's conclusions in the report that the February protests demonstrated the fragility of the security situation. Quite to the contrary, the vast majority of the population, authorities and law enforcement have demonstrated their ability to act in a legitimate manner. We hope that the High Representative, our partners in the Security Council and the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council together will uphold the need for dialogue between the Bosnian parties in the run-up to the October elections. The way forward for the peace process should continue to be the transfer of responsibility to Bosnians themselves.

Mr. De Antueno (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I thank the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Valentin Inzko, for his briefing and the report on the implementation of Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/2014/314, annex).

Argentina has previously reaffirmed its support for the Dayton Agreement and for the defence and preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These are conditions that, together with respect for the rule of law, we believe are essential to lasting peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, it seems to be ever more necessary for a critical evaluation to be undertaken of the current approach of the international community so that the country can be effectively supported to achieve irreversible progress.

The demonstrations that took place in various cities throughout the country in February were an expression of the frustration citizens feel and should serve as a warning. The lack of meaningful and concrete measures to implement the remaining requirements of the five objectives and two conditions for the closure of the Office of the High Representative has been a constant in recent reports received by the Council. Likewise, we continue to hear reports of continuing challenges to the powers of the central State by the entities and on the non-enforcement of decisions of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We remain concerned by reports referring to statements by senior officials of Republika Srpska promoting the dissolution of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina and challenging the basic provisions of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, it remains impossible to hold local elections in the city of Mostar because of the inability to implement the 2010 ruling of the Constitutional Court on the city's electoral system. This prevents progress in the implementation of the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in the *Sejdic-Finci* case.

There have been repeated calls on the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to step up their efforts to reach an agreement on the implementation of the Constitutional Court ruling. That would ensure respect for the rule of law, allow elections to be held in Mostar and promote renewed efforts to achieve an agreement allowing for the effective protection of the rights of non-constituent peoples, as the efforts of the international community in this regard seem not to have attained their objectives.

Positive developments include the adoption of amendments to the law governing the issuance of identification numbers for citizens, which ended a political and institutional crisis that lasted several months. Significant progress was made in unblocking the process of delayed appointments to the Federation Constitutional Court and its vital national interest panel. In this regard, we highlight the good offices of the Office of High Representative.

However we are concerned that it has not yet been possible to reverse the overall negative trend and resume the progress that was being made in early 2012. It is ever more necessary to achieve a deeper understanding of the underlying causes for the lack of progress. Only in that way will the international community be able to adapt its approach, continue working together with Bosnia Herzegovina and offer its support more effectively.

Finally, Argentina wishes to reiterate once again its support for the work of the Office of the High Representative in implementing the civilian aspects of the Dayton Peace Agreement and its efforts to help

Government entities to comply with the terms of the peace agreement and the State Constitution. We believe it is necessary to continue to provide the Office the sufficient resources and political support to fulfil its mandate under the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Mr. Nduhungirehe (Rwanda): I would like to thank Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for presenting the forty-fifth report on the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/2014/314, annex). We applaud his continued efforts over the past five years in ensuring the full implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace.

Rwanda is concerned by the continued deterioration of the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the national and states levels alike. The main concern for us is the increasing rhetoric by senior officials of Republika Srpska, including President Milorad Dodik, predicting and advocating the dissolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the independence of the Republika Srpska, as well as the attempt to link the situation in Ukraine as a motivating factor for the future secession from the State. We recall that the self-determination of any State within the country would be in violation of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as of the General Framework Agreement for Peace. We urge the authorities in the Republika Srpska to refrain from any negative rhetoric and to engage constructively in efforts towards national unity and reconciliation.

The immediate consequence of such rhetoric is a lack of the political will that would be fundamental to reaching an agreement on many legislative proposals. Those include legislation related to State and defence property, which is important for making progress in the implementation of the outstanding objectives of the "5+2" agenda as prerequisites for the closure of the Office of the High Representative. The current stalemate in the political situation is an impediment for the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities to reach their Euro-Atlantic integration goal, and we hope that the benefits of such integration will be a driving factor for overcoming the gridlock.

Despite positive economic growth and improvement of the foreign trade balance in 2013, the economic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still dire, with a very high unemployment rate, at almost half of the active population, a sharp decrease in foreign direct investment and serious fiscal challenges. All political actors must show resolve, solidarity and a sense of responsibility to improve the economic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The demonstrations that were held in February in several cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, mainly in Mostar, resulting from frustration over the socioeconomic situation, were an indication that local official needs to strengthen the fight against corruption. However, it is regrettable that what should have been a peaceful demonstration turned violent, causing injuries to a number of police officers, protestors and journalists. We strongly condemn the destruction of public property, and in particular the burning of the presidency building. In that regard, we reiterate our support for the European Union military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which will continue supporting the local authorities in preserving peace and safety for the local population.

In the meantime, we are disappointed that no tangible action has been taken by domestic authorities and political parties to implement the 2011 ruling of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court on the current electoral system in Mostar. We call on all political actors to assume their responsibility and to end the crisis and to enable the election for a functioning city council.

We welcome the appointment of two new judges to the Federation's Constitutional Court, and we hope that the appointment of the remaining ninth judge will take place in the near future. In that respect, we encourage the relevant authorities to complete the establishment of a functional, vital, national interest panel within the Court, ahead of the October general elections so as to ensure the smooth and timely formation of the post-election Government.

With regard to the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in the *Sejdic-Finci* case, we commend the efforts made by senior European Union officials to find a lasting solution. We encourage the political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to redouble their efforts in order to reach an agreement on a constitutional amendment that provides equal political rights for all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including minorities.

Next month, as we commemorate the centenary of the First World War and the attack in Sarajevo, as mentioned by Mr. Inzko, we also recall that next July the world will commemorate the twentieth anniversary

of the genocide against the Bosniaks in Srebrenica, committed only one year after the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. We Rwandans believe that paying tribute to the victims and survivors of that tragedy should begin by fighting against the deniers of the genocide. We therefore call upon all political actors in the country to assume responsibility and to avoid questioning the decision of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the *Krstić* case and to work towards healing, reconciliation and the economic empowerment of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan): I would like to begin by thanking High Representative Valentin Inzko for his briefing to us this morning and for his forty-fifth report to the Council (S/2014/314, annex).

Listening to the High Representative and reading his report is sobering. While there are some positive developments highlighted, particularly where the people are concerned at the municipal level, like the formation of plenums soon after the February protests, much of the enmity that existed in Bosnia and Herzegovina before and during the war still remains. That is most evident at the level of senior officials, especially those who argue, with increasing vigour, for the dissolution of the State.

The Bosnian War was a war that at least three of us at this table experienced firsthand. It was a cruel war that achieved absolutely nothing, in which for most of its duration a mechanized army inflicted massive violence against a largely defenceless civilian population. It was as pathetic as it was criminal — a war which brought inexcusable pain to the Bosnian people and in which the victims who survived it suffer still. It was a war that wounded everyone somehow, and in which the battlefields were not the streets of Sarajevo, Mostar or Tuzla, but rather, to borrow from Denis Mukwege, the battlefields over which the war in Bosnia were fought were the very bodies of the victims themselves: the rapes, the enforced pregnancies, the torture and all that killing. And for what? For one ethnicity or another? My delegation has never heard of a human value called ethnicity. Or was the war waged because, as we were told then, those prosecuting it were the real victims once? If every people believed they were justified in breaking customary international law because of crimes committed against their parents, grandparents or forebears, the Council would remain in permanent session and the world would be ungovernable.

We concede that the oppression and persecution of any people today ought to be resisted by those very same people and that resistance ought to be lawful too. No one would dispute that. But citing an oppression that simply does not exist or that existed some 50, 60 or hundreds of years agom, is no basis today for adopting policies laden with obstruction and division, the effect of which can only ultimately imperil peace.

There are still enough Croats, Serbs and Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina who want nothing more than a life where they can prosper together in something like normal circumstances. They want to be part of the European Union. They know that further division would be bad for them and that if left unresolved, the present state of political polarization does not augur well either. As we saw dramatically at the beginning of the year, what they want most is functional Government.

We agree with the High Representative. The international community must look deeper into why it is the tensions persist and what could be done to reverse the gradual deterioration of the political condition. The General Framework Agreement for Peace provides no legal basis for secession by the Republika Srpska, and so every effort must be invested to forge a serious discussion on the historical narratives and about the reckoning required before a deeply felt reconciliation becomes possible.

Twenty years ago, the Council met urgently, almost every day, on the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Now, two decades later, we must begin to wake up and pay closer attention again to the problems facing this important country, knowing full well what the ultimate consequences could look like if the steady deterioration were to remain unchecked.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I wish to thank High Representative Inzko for his briefing and for his tireless efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The United States continues to support his mandate and commends his work to encourage the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to advance on a broad range of issues related to the General Framework Agreement for Peace. We remain steadfast in encouraging Governments at all levels to focus on key priorities, including capitalizing on positive civic engagement, ensuring that general elections go forward as planned in October, enacting reforms necessary for Euro-Atlantic integration and refraining from disturbing secessionist

rhetoric. Today, I would like to touch briefly on each of those four issues.

In February, thousands of protesters in cities across Bosnia and Herzegovina joined together to express dissatisfaction with the lack of long-term economic and political progress in the country. Protesters noted grievances about unemployment, corruption and other social concerns. We regret that protests briefly turned violent, resulting in injuries and damage to buildings, and that some political actors attempted to use the protests to discourage public discourse and to stoke ethnic tensions. The United States recognizes that both peaceful protests and democratic institutions, such as plenums, can serve key roles. They allow the public to express views that political leaders should listen to and respect. We hope that Bosnian citizens will continue active peaceful engagement in advance of and beyond the October general elections.

Furthermore, we commend the Government for adopting necessary amendments to the election law. We hope that election preparations will move forward smoothly. As preparations progress, we call on politicians and political parties to campaign on concrete proposals for economic and political reforms, instead of attempting to distract the public with divisive nationalist rhetoric.

The politicization of the regulation on residency has been yet another concern in the lead-up to elections. Although there is a need to amend existing legislation, the rights of returnees and the freedom of movement of all citizens must be respected. Attempts to address those issues unilaterally at the entity level and to block the functioning of State-level institutions are unacceptable.

In addition to holding general elections throughout the country, authorities are to hold local elections in Mostar no later than October. In that regard, we hope that political parties and institutions will meet their obligations to implement the ruling of the Bosnian Constitutional Court on the electoral system for Mostar.

Looking beyond elections, we hope Bosnia and Herzegovina will again focus on key reforms for Euro-Atlantic integration, which the United States continues to view as the surest and most expeditious path to the country's long-term stability and prosperity. As the High Representative notes in his report (S/2014/314, annex), authorities failed to make any concrete progress on the outstanding "5+2" objectives and criteria. We also share his concern over the Republika Srpska's lack of compliance with its obligation to provide the High Representative with timely access to officials, institutions and documents.

Despite efforts by senior European officials, Bosnian leaders failed to reach a final agreement on implementing the European Court of Human Rights decision in the *Sejdic-Finci* case, a key requirement for European Union (EU) integration. A defence property solution, which is also a "5+2" requirement, remains the condition for activating Bosnia and Herzegovina's NATO membership action plan.

Finally, the United States strongly supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina as guaranteed by the Dayton Peace Accords. We strongly condemn recent statements calling for Republika Srpska's secession. Any action taken by Republika Srpska towards the dissolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina would violate Dayton as well as the Bosnian Constitution. Secessionist statements are nothing more than attempts to distract the public from the economic and political stagnation of the past four years.

We continue to support the EU-led peacekeeping force Operation Althea and the NATO headquarters in Sarajevo. We believe those institutions are essential in sustaining a safe and secure environment in Bosnia, provide essential capacity-building to the Government and provide reassurance across ethnic lines that the international community is committed to Bosnian stability.

We are optimistic about the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina and will continue to work with the Bosnian Government to encourage progress and to improve the lives of its citizens and to advance its path to Euro-Atlantic integration.

Mr. Tatham (United Kingdom): I would like to join others in welcoming High Representative Valentin Inzko back to the Council and to thank him for his comprehensive and objective report (S/2014/314, annex). The United Kingdom strongly supports the work of the High Representative and his ongoing commitment to ensure the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords against significant political and security challenges.

The United Kingdom shares the High Representative's deep concern over the ongoing situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The country's development has been brought to a halt by economic and political stagnation.

There continues to be no substantive progress towards European Union and NATO membership and there has been a worrying increase in secessionist rhetoric and civil unrest. The violence and protests that broke out in February in several major cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina — like others, we regret that those briefly turned violent — were a clear demonstration of the population's deep dissatisfaction with the country's current situation. That should be a wake-up call for Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders and for the international community. We must now focus on turning that difficult moment into an opportunity for all the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That requires a unified international response that sets out a new commitment to a broader agenda in the country.

For their part, Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders need to engage fully with domestic grievances, in particular those centred on socioeconomic issues. As the High Representative has said, that is a fundamental change in the political dynamics that is very necessary. The political space needs to be filled with a genuine commitment to promoting the interests of Bosnian citizens, not with divisive nationalist rhetoric.

We support the High Representative's view that an engaged and proactive civil society is vital for the country's democratic future. Both Bosnia and Herzegovina's politicians and the international community should continue to engage with those domestic voices for change. A strong sense of local ownership will be the key to delivering those aspirations for reform.

We share the High Representative's concern regarding the recent increase in divisive rhetoric from politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina seeking to manipulate the protests into an ethnic issue. Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders should be in no doubt that the international community is unwavering in our commitment to the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign and united country. In that context we welcome the constructive approach taken by Bosnia and Herzegovina's regional neighbours, including the Prime Minister of Serbia's visit to Sarajevo on 13 May and his clear affirmation of the Dayton Agreement and Bosnia and Herzegovina's territorial integrity.

The United Kingdom calls on all signatories to the Dayton Agreement to abide by their commitments. It is entirely unacceptable that the authorities in Republika Srpska have failed to cooperate with the Office of the High Representative. Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders are obliged to cooperate with the High Representative and the international organizations and agencies set out in the Dayton Peace Accords and provide them with the necessary access to officials, institutions and documents in order to let them carry out their mandate.

The United Kingdom strongly supports the efforts of the European Union (EU) and NATO to help the country make progress on its Euro-Atlantic path and work towards delivering the "5+2" conditionality that would enable a closure of the Office of the High Representative. But it is clear that we are not there yet. Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders need to demonstrate that they are genuine partners for reform. The country has a clear route towards EU and NATO membership, which will provide the proven framework for peace, security and regional cooperation. The United Kingdom is fully supportive of that goal and will do everything it can to facilitate progress. But Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders need to work together with their own citizens to create real change and make progress on the country's Euro-Atlantic future.

In that regard, we strongly support the role of EU Special Representative Peter Sørensen, who has put together a package of measures to drive reform in the country. The United Kingdom endorses those initiatives, such as the May conference on a compact for growth. The EU Special Representative will play a vital role in re-energizing the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We commend his continued close and collaborative working relationship with High Representative Inzko.

We are deeply concerned by the fragility of the political and security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The United Kingdom shares the High Representative's assessment that the European Union-led peacekeeping force Operation Althea continues to play a central role in supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina's own efforts to maintain a safe and secure environment. We will therefore support the retention of that vital asset when its mandate comes up for renewal later in the year.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I also thank the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina for his briefing. I align myself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union. I will concentrate on three points.

First, the Bosnian people clearly demonstrated their discontent in February. As Mr. Inzko has highlighted, the demonstrations expressed the growing mistrust of an elite that has, to date, failed to create functioning State institutions, meet its people's needs or provide prospects for the future. Regrettably, the protest turned briefly violent, but luckily resulted in property damage only. However, it called into question institutional viability. It showed that Bosnians wish to have their voices heard and will recognized in creating a trustworthy political class with integrity. That is the basic lesson to be drawn from the citizens groups known as plenums that were created following the February demonstrations.

We support a peaceful expression of the emerging political awareness, through strong civic participation in October's general elections. As we look forward, the electoral campaign must enable those desiring to lead Bosnia to prove that they are able to meet the expectations of all Bosnians, particularly in the socioeconomic sphere.

February's demonstrations have proved that Bosnians — some of whom never knew the country of Yugoslavia — today desire a new future. We must endeavour, together, to provide them with long-term prospects.

The prospect of European integration offers the only viable way forward for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that prospect should act as a catalyst for the transformation of the country. We reiterate our commitment to seeing Bosnia and Herzegovina join the European Union as a united and sovereign country that enjoys full territorial integrity. That hope is widely shared by the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for whom the European Union has never lost its appeal. We want to see that mutual desire translated into reality.

The European Union has a full role to play in the socioeconomic area in particular. In launching the initiative to promote growth and employment, the European Union is involved in two ways in Bosnia and Herzegovina: by intervening directly in response to the economic needs of the population; and by supporting the country's authorities to take the necessary reform measures to allow the emergence of a sustainable economy. However, it remains true than the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina will need to undertake reforms in the future to make their country more functional.

Finally, while the European Union mission, Operation Althea, retains a residual ability to support the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Union must intervene primarily in the area of capacity-building to allow the Bosnian security forces to operate independently.

The framework inherited from Dayton remains the framework for action by the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The High Representative, Mr. Inzko, who is the guarantor of the peace accords, has our full support, and we commend his impartial work to support the emergence of a State that is united and responds to all of the aspirations of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We recall that all parties have an obligation to cooperate with him and his services under the very terms of the agreements, in particular to provide him with the required documentation.

We also call on all the constituent parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina to put an end to all nationalist rhetoric and stop any action that divides the country. Our message is clear: there can be no questioning of the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The future of Bosnia and Herzegovina requires increasingly close cooperation between its constituent entities. Intercommunal reconciliation is crucial to consolidating the sense, by all parties, that they belong and have a shared history and destiny. It is in that spirit of reconciliation that France is involved in the commemoration of the First World War in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to which Mr. Inzko referred earlier.

Ms. King (Australia): I would like to thank the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Valentin Inzko, for his comprehensive briefing. We continue to believe that the Office of the High Representative has an important role to play in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mr. Inzko's briefing today has reminded us of the utility of the various strands of his important work, and we thank him for his efforts.

Australia reaffirms its support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We remain convinced that that is necessary to ensure peace and stability in the country and the broader Western Balkans region. We renew our calls on all political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in Republika Srpska, not to undermine the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The lead-up to the twentieth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement next year is an opportunity to reflect on how far Bosnia and Herzegovina has come since the end of the tragic civil war. Over the past 19 years

of peace, Bosnia and Herzegovina has transitioned from a post-conflict society to one that is looking towards European Union accession. Its governance institutions are now meeting regularly. Consequently, the Office of the High Representative has been able to take a lesser role in the domestic affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Nevertheless, significant challenges remain. We share Mr. Inzko's assessment that Bosnia and Herzegovina has not progressed as far and as fast as it could have, due to the inability of its leaders to agree on important political and economic reforms. Over the past six months, Bosnia and Herzegovina has not moved forward on its declared path of Euro-Atlantic integration. Yet, in our view, that will be vital to the country's long-term prosperity and stability. The lack of agreement on a coordinating mechanism with the European Union is obstructing Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress towards European Union integration. The country's political leaders must resolve that impasse. The implementation of the *Sejdic-Finci* ruling remains essential to ensuring equality for all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and that they are able to take part in shaping their country's future. The lack of progress on the status of military property blocks the activation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's NATO membership action plan.

In December, the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board noted again the failure of Bosnia and Herzegovina to address the remaining objectives and conditions for the closure of the Office of the High Representative. We call on all political actors in the country to work productively to reach the compromises necessary to advance that process.

The emergence of direct-democracy forms of civic engagement, as embodied in recent plenums, was a positive development. We were concerned by the brief outbreak of violence in February, which marred otherwise peaceful demonstrations. However, Australia is supportive of the right of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to peacefully express their frustration with the socioeconomic situation, the levels of corruption and the high unemployment rates. That type of civic engagement has the potential to be a powerful tool to focus the political debate on the necessary governance and socioeconomic reforms.

Australia also welcomes the fact that the situation in the country remains generally calm, and we renew our appreciation for the role played by the European Union military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina in supporting a safe and secure environment. We would also like to note the continuing importance of the work done by the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina to control and manage the country's ammunition and weapons, including aging and surplus material. With the support of the international community, including NATO and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the disposal of that material contributes directly to security and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosnia and Herzegovina can continue on a path towards integration with Europe, as its neighbours have done, or it can fall further behind. While the international community has an important role to play, it is up to the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to enact the reforms necessary to achieve a stable, peaceful and prosperous future for its citizens.

Mr. Gálvez (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Valentin Inzko, and thank him for his report (S/2014/314, annex) and his important work for peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We would like to start by expressing our regret that the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement remains a daily challenge because of the differences between the political parties, the political stalemate, the failure to implement the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights and the negative and secessionist rhetoric of Republika Srpska, which should be denounced by the international community. Those acts undermine national cohesion between the different ethnic communities in the country, hinder national reconciliation and delay the country's progress towards Euro-Atlantic integration. In that respect, we call on the country's political class to shoulder their agreed responsibilities and work in a spirit of reconciliation to deal with the challenges facing the country. A fundamental change is needed in the political class, as Mr. Inzko stated. In that context, Chile reiterates its support for the Dayton Peace Agreement, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and respect for the rule of law at the national and international levels.

We are concerned about the deteriorating situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which highlights the failure to make progress in the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which was signed 19 years ago. The violent demonstrations in early February in

several major cities were, above all, a call for elected officials and political parties to change course in order to effectively support the country's progress. It was a call on the political class to focus its energy on the interests of the people.

We appreciate the efforts of the High Representative and we support the important work he carries out to strengthen the rule of law, comply with the rulings of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, facilitate reforms to ensure national prosperity and oversee the return of displaced persons in the country. However, the lack of progress on the five objectives and two conditions for the closure of the Office of the High Representative is an indication of Bosnia and Herzegovina's lack of commitment to the future. We urge the leaders of all parties involved to work constructively to break the impasse.

We support Bosnia and Herzegovina's efforts to overcome its past. We underscore the progress that has been made, such as the amendments to legislation that regulates the issuance of citizen identification numbers, which were finally adopted and which allow citizens to once again receive those numbers from the central State. We also urge all political leaders to refrain from negative rhetoric and do their utmost to achieve genuine integration and national reconciliation.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the firm commitment, which my country has demonstrated since the beginning, to the process of moving towards a stable Bosnia and Herzegovina that is committed to defending its territorial integrity in a politically stable State and with institutions that work to serve its people, in particular with regard to job creation for youth, in peace and prosperity.

Chile participated in the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina with police personnel and continues to work within the European Union-led force Operation Althea. It has thereby maintained 10 years of uninterrupted Chilean military presence there.

We call on the international community to maintain its commitment to support the aspirations of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to a peaceful and prosperous Euro-Atlantic future. We also wish to support initiatives aimed at national reconciliation. In that connection, it is important to provide the necessary resources to ensure that the mandate under the framework of the Dayton Agreement of 1995 is fulfilled.

Finally, I want to reaffirm our support and commitment to the Office of the High Representative, which must continue to receive the political support and resources necessary to carry out its important work.

Mrs. Kazragienė (Lithuania): We warmly welcome Mr. Valentine Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the Security Council, thank him for his report (S/2014/314, annex) and reiterate our support to him.

Lithuania associates itself with the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union.

Almost 20 years ago, the Dayton Agreement ended the three-and-a-half-year-long Bosnian war. At the time, we had a vision of a united, stable, prosperous, multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina. Today Bosnia and Herzegovina is lagging behind its neighbours and other countries in the region. The political will of the leaders of the country to find consensus on compelling issues is crucial. Sound political will is already evidenced in the region, such as Croatia's recent accession to the European Union and the ongoing Belgrade-Pristina dialogue stipulating the progressive steps of Serbia and Kosovo towards the European Union. We commend neighbouring countries for their political support to Bosnia and Herzegovina and for their readiness to engage in regional cooperation, including, and most importantly, on economic cooperation.

In April, the European Union sent a strong message to the political allies of Bosnia and Herzegovina calling for collective responsibility. The European Union also reassured it of its engagement and support. Broadening the European Union agenda clearly indicates that the European Union does not intend to retreat or reduce its presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the future of the country is in the hands of its people and its political leaders. Like the representative of Jordan, we have not heard of the universal human value of ethnicity either.

We commend the decision of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Central Election Commission to announce the holding of general elections in October. We urge the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to actively participate in the elections and to choose leadership that will take on the responsibility of charting a path towards irreversible progress in the country. There should be no place for disrespectful or divisive rhetoric throughout the electoral campaign and in general.

We are concerned about increasing statements from a number of Republika Srpska officials challenging the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as stated in the report under discussion today. Lithuania reaffirms its commitment to the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign and united country.

Much remains to be done to foster economic development in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the country has the highest rate of youth unemployment — 59 per cent — the lowest rate of economic activity, the highest level of social assistance and the lowest foreign direct investment per capita in the region. The socioeconomic protests that started in February are a reflection of that frustration. The lack of economic growth is detrimental to restoring confidence between political leaders and society. Without the rule of law, good governance and anti-corruption measures, economic growth will be inconclusive and stagnate further. We urge the competent authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to launch reforms to strengthen the legislative and regulatory framework.

There is also an urgent need to create a functioning State structure that would enable Bosnia and Herzegovina to be a credible partner. The Dayton Peace Agreement was a necessary tool to end the worst war in Europe since the Second World War. The fact that the country has proven capable of determining its future in a safe and secure environment is a major achievement for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The international community, with its substantial political and financial commitment, has played an important role in supporting reforms in the country. The achievements should be sustained and built upon. Again, all responsibility lies with the political leaders of the country.

I wish to recall here resolution 2123 (2013), which calls on Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leaders to refrain from divisive rhetoric and make further concrete and tangible progress towards European Union integration, including by implementing the European Court of Human Rights ruling in the *Sejdić-Finci* case.

We support the Office of the High Representative in fostering initiatives for more inclusive dialogue among all ethnic communities, including at the local level. We believe that the new leadership will be committed to translating the legitimate concerns of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina into legislative and fully implemented initiatives to launch structural and institutional reforms, including the strengthening of the rule of law, anti-corruption and financial accountability measures and protecting human rights. It is critical that the international community remain committed to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The interests of States — not individuals — must prevail in the decision-making process, which will lead the country to political stability and economic welfare.

Finally we reiterate that, as long as the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina fail to implement the standing requirements necessary for the closure of the Office of the High Representative, the Office has an important to play.Lithuania also stands ready to engage in discussions, together with regional and international partners, on a possible recalibration of the approach towards the mandate of the Office.

Mr. Wang Min (China): I thank High Representative Inzko for his briefing.

China welcomes the positive progress achieved by Bosnia and Herzegovina in enhancing national reconciliation, promoting economic development and building and strengthening the rule of law. Meanwhile, we note that Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to face complications and difficulties in achieving sustainable economic and social development and lasting peace and stability in the country, and that it continues to need support and assistance from the international community.

China respects the independence, sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

China also respects the right of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to decide the future of their country, and supports the right of all the country's ethnic groups to live in peace, harmony and common development. We hope that all ethnic groups will work on behalf of the long-term interests of their country, take practical measures to strengthen the outcome of the political process, resolve their differences through dialogue and cooperation, and implement the Dayton Peace Agreement in a comprehensive manner with a view to achieving greater progress in all areas of State-building.

The question of Bosnia and Herzegovina is extremely complex and sensitive. The international community should take a balanced and prudent approach

by fully respecting the leadership and ownership of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and commit itself to playing a positive role in promoting unity and cooperation among all the ethnic groups of the country. China supports High Representative Inzko in his efforts to fulfil his mandated activities in an appropriate and constructive manner and to continue to play a positive role in promoting the political process in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

China welcomes the assistance provided by the International Monetary Fund in maintaining the financial and economic stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina. China is prepared to join the international community in its ongoing efforts to make its due contribution to the peace, stability and development of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I too thank the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko, for his briefing and commitment.

Luxembourg associates itself with the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union.

The High Representative has painted a bleak picture of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The negative trend of recent years has continued. Economic performance remains below the country's potential. Inter-institutional deadlock persists. Statements made by Republika Srpska leaders questioning the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina have become more frequent. Bosnian politicians have failed to implement the reforms necessary to move the country forward on the path to European Union membership, even though such membership is the stated objective of the leaders of the country and desired by the vast majority of Bosnians. The question of military property, which has been pending for years, continues to prevent any progress in the implementation of the NATO membership action plan. Much remains to be done in the fields of the rule of law, the fight against corruption and the protection of human rights. Of particular importance in that regard is the implementation of the judgement of the European Court of Human Rights in the *Sejdic-Finci* case in order to ensure the equality of all citizens before the law.

Luxembourg shares the concerns expressed by the High Representative, but we must not stop there. We must look forward; hence the importance of the ongoing concrete and multifaceted support that the European Union provides to the institutions and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This support focuses on the rule of law, institutional reform with a view to the establishment of efficient governance, the maintenance of order and security, and economic reforms. The events that took place in February in several several Bosnian cities reflect the impatience of citizens calling for an improved socioeconomic situation. All citizens, especially the young, require new opportunities. The political leaders of the country must create them.

The international community is ready to actively support the efforts of the Bosnians. We welcome in this respect the launch of the Compact for Jobs and Growth, to take place on 26 and 27 May in Sarajevo with the support of the European Union. The Compact is intended to assist the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina to define concrete structural socioeconomic reforms to boost the economy and stimulate job creation in the short and medium terms.

We appeal to the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to start listening to the public and to meet the legitimate concerns of citizens in dialogue with civil society. We share the hope expressed by the High Representative that the increased civic engagement embodied by the plenums — the civic groups that formed as a result of the events that took place early this year — will lead to greater accountability on the part of Bosnian leaders at the local and national levels. The prospect of the general elections in October should encourage policymakers to intensify their efforts to address the grievances of citizens.

It should be noted that the security situation remained generally calm over the past six months. Polls show that the vast majority of Bosnians feel safe. The European Union Force has not had to intervene to restore peace. That represents a trend to be welcomed.

Let me conclude by emphasizing that separatist rhetoric intended to sow division has no place in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Luxembourg reaffirms its deep conviction that the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign, united, stable, prosperous and multiethnic State is within the European family, like its neighbours. We know that this belief is shared by the international community, the countries of the region and the vast majority of Bosnian citizens. Bosnia and Herzegovina can count on the continued support of Luxembourg to help realize its European destiny.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I thank High Representative Inzko for his briefing. I also commend him for the diligent manner in which he has carried out his mandate.

Nigeria notes with concern the limited progress made in implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement, the frequent calls of the President and officials of Republika Srpska for secession from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the public attacks against key State institutions. We share the concern of the High Representative over statements made by public figures. Promoting secession could have a destabilizing effect on the country. Such divisive rhetoric is inimical to national cohesion and could indeed have negative consequences for the peace and stability of the region.

Another threat to the cohesion of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the use of constitutional blocking mechanisms at the State level to prevent the country from making progress, and then exploiting that to justify calls for the dissolution of the country. Political leaders, especially at the State level, must understand that the country's Constitution precludes the possibility of secession. We urge them to refrain from calling for the dissolution of the country. We support efforts to strengthen the State at the national level while preserving the rights and prerogatives of all communities.

We note with concern the other challenges to the General Framework Agreement for Peace, mentioned in the report before the Council (S/2014/314), including the blocking of the functioning of Bosnia and Herzegovina's central institutions, challenges to the competencies of those institutions, challenges to the single economic space in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and challenges to national judicial institutions. We urge political leaders in Republika Srpska to cooperate with the central Government and refrain from taking steps that would challenge the constitutional authority of the central Government and relevant central institutions. It is necessary for leaders at the State level to appreciate the limits of power at that level.

We call for more support for the revised strategy for the implementation of annex VII of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, which addresses issues of non-discrimination, non-segregation and inclusiveness. Nigeria would like to see all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina accorded equal status across the country regardless of their ethnicity. We therefore urge political leaders to refrain from adopting residency laws at the entity level that are solely within the competence of the central Government and do not comply with the provisions of the General Framework Agreement for Peace.

We are pleased to note that more active engagement by citizens has led to greater accountability on the part of the Government and has encouraged the political class to refocus its energies on serving the interests of citizens. As the High Representative said in his briefing, that has the potential of deepening democracy and fostering good governance in the country.

As Bosnia and Herzegovina approaches the general elections in October, we are concerned that the Constitution grants only ethnic Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats the right to contest in presidential and parliamentary elections. That curbs the political rights of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who do not belong to those three ethnic groups and effectively shuts them out of elective office. In the interest of inclusiveness, we would like to see that law changed so that all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina can participate freely as candidates in elections.

Mr. Mangaral (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this important follow-up meeting on Bosnia and Herzegovina. I also thank Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his briefing and for his report (S/2014/314, annex).

Bosnia and Herzegovina emerged as a result of one of the deadliest European crises since the fall of the Berlin Wall. In spite of the adoption, in December 1995, of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, whose overall goal was to consolidate peace and establish a tripartite governing system in order to preserve territorial integrity, challenges continue to persist all these years later. Bosnia and Herzegovina finds itself in a situation in which the growing popular frustration and disatisfaction, the rise of nationalism, the legislative stalement at the federal and local levels, the challenges in holding of general elections in October and the delay in achieving objectives and conditions set by the the Office of the High Representative threaten the foundations of the nation State.

First, with regard to the demonstrations that began in February in Tuzla, which then spread to Zenica, Mostar, Sarajevo and elsewhere, we deplore the violent turn of the protests and the resulting injuries and major damage to property. We nevertheless commend and welcome the protesters' initiative in setting up plenums

as vehicles for dialogue in which to air complaints, thereby illustrating their capacity to organize and their desire to engage for the public good. Owing to the nature of their complaints — which called for reducing the salaries and privileges of elected officials and reviewing privatization and socio-economic reforms — the plenums have come to serve as genuine and responsible interlocutors when it comes to development, and that in a country in which the unemployment rate exceeds 40 per cent. That type of participation assures the basis for democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The country's leaders should take advantage of those achievements and turn them into an element of national consensus.

We believe that diversity is an a crucial aspect in building the nation State. Acts of exclusion and discrimination linked to the conflict in the Balkans are supposed to be resolved through the Dayton Agreement. We deplore the fact that the new situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is marked by major political differences. We also deplore the secessionist and pro-independence rhetoric, which poses a serious threat to the country's unity and stability. We condemn such acts and call on political actors to respect the territorial integrity of the country.

Chad welcomes the planned holding of general elections in October, in connection with which the Parliament set up an inter-agency working group in November 2013 to develop a law and prepare for the elections in the country. We also commend the efforts made by the federal Government to continue to function regularly and to pursue its efforts in drafting and adopting new laws in an unstable and fragile institutional context. The inability of State institutions to function normally owing to infighting saps the willingness to address political, legal and economic issues. We encourage the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to undertake economic reforms likely to contribute effectively to addressing the social situation in the country and fomenting good governance.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates its support for the efforts of the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We urge the international community, and the Security Council, the European Union and NATO in particular, to redouble their efforts to provide Bosnia and Herzegovinca with the necessary assistance to consolidate national unity and strengthen its institutional capacity for the sake of peace and stability.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Republic of Korea.

My delegation welcomes to the Council High Representative Valentin Inzko. We appreciate his briefing.

While we acknowledge recent positive developments such as the appointment of Constitutional Court judges, it is disappointing that the lack of agreement among political actors continues to have a negative impact on the overall reform process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are also concerned that the ongoing political gridlock has undermined the country's progress towards Euro-Atlantic integration and fanned economic hardship, producing high unemployment. The protests that started in early February obviously attest to the frustration of the people. Another worrying trend is the increased divisive rhetoric challenging the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. Commitment to the unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina as one sovereign country is the very foundation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. We reiterate our full support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Given the current lack of ownership by political stakeholders, the plenums that emerged as a platform for civil society are a welcome development. We hope that new form of constructive political discourse can help to enhance accountability in the politics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We also call for more dialogue among all political stakeholders with a view to bringing about concrete reforms, including the long-overdue implementation of the *Sejdić- Finci* ruling. We hope that the elections in October will provide momentum with which the country can move forward towards a more equitable democracy.

Before I conclude, I would like again to express our full support for the efforts of the High Representative.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ms. Čolaković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): We would like to reiterate that the security situation in the country remains calm, peaceful and stabile. The European Union (EU) military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to play an important role in supporting our efforts in dealing with threats that could

undermine a safe and secure environment, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. In addition, we take this opportunity to reiterate our appreciation to those Member States that participate in the EU-led force in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

With regard to the functioning of the highest State institutions, the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been meeting regularly. Bearing in mind that Bosnia and Herzegovina has moved from being a host country to one that now participates in United Nations peacekeeping operations, as well as in NATO operations such as the International Security Assistance Force, we would like to highlight that the Presidency has adopted decisions on extending the participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in international operations in Afghanistan, on peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo and on the contribution of troops to the United Mission in Mali.

As to the references in paragraph 30 of the report that the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina was unable to agree on situation in Ukraine, I would like to clarify the following. While we deeply appreciate the role of the High Representative in overseeing the implementation of the agreement without being responsible for the evaluation of foreign policy decisions, I want to remind the Security Council that the Presidency is responsible for conducting the foreign policy of the country and makes decisions by consensus on all foreign policy issues according to the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Furthermore, I would like to remind the Security Council that my country is fully determined to promote a peaceful resolution of the conflicts in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, the Presidency issued a statement on 6 March that called on all the parties to the dispute in Ukraine to refrain from the use of force and to immediately engage in political dialogue to resolve the situation in the interests of peace and regional and global stability.

We believe that involving women in conflict prevention and mediation and deploying women protection advisers to United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions are crucial to building and reinforcing peace. We have been working on additional efforts to advance that issue and have adopted a policy whereby one third of candidates nominated for peacekeeping missions must be women.

The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina also continued to convene on a regular basis, adopting new laws and sets of amendments to existing legislation. Those included the 2014 State budget, the public procurement law and amendments to the law on the electricity transmission company and amendments to the law on money laundering and the financing of terrorist activities. The work plan of the Council of Ministers for 2014 was also adopted, as were a framework budget for the period 2014 to 2016 and a partnership action plan for NATO for the same period.

As in all other countries of the world, we have our own challenges. We face difficult economic crises and bitter austerity measures with negative implications on all aspects of human life. In that connection, we would like to inform the Council that protests against poor economic conditions took place in several major cities of the country on 7 February. The Council of Ministers held two sessions with the relevant State-level law enforcement agencies to discuss how best to improve the provision of security for the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

However, the challenges we face will not discourage us from fighting for better respect of human rights and a better life for our citizens. We see a need to work on eliminating all serious obstacles in order to achieve the noble goal of universal respect for human rights. Without sustainable progress on the protection of all human rights, especially economic and social rights, including strengthening the rule of law and anti-corruption and financial accountability measures, there is no sustainable development and security. All those components are mutually reinforcing. In that regard, we welcome the European Union's readiness to support initiatives to improve economic governance, strengthen competitiveness and stimulate economic growth in my country.

Peaceful societies are the basis for sustainable development. That is the reason that we are dedicated to working for the future, which means more work on political will and the allocation of resources in order to ensure the implementation of strategies and programmes for development. In addition, there is also the issue of the accountability and ensuring quality of life for our citizens, especially women, girls and youth, in dignity with equal opportunities, including access to health services, education and meaningful employment.

In addition, we would also like to inform the Council that the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina

and the House of Peoples have adopted amendments to legislation that regulate the issuance of citizen identification numbers. In accordance with the provisions of the election law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we expect the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to announce this month the holding of general elections to take place in October.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has made significant progress towards European integration despite all the complexities present within its society. Genuine commitment to the European path has been our highest priority. In that regard, we would like to take this opportunity to commend the European Union's increased engagement and heightened role in our country, including the enhanced presence by the combined European Union Special Representative and its delegation.

My country remains a potential candidate for European Union membership. The Stabilization and Association Agreement between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union was ratified in 2011 but has not yet entered into force. However, the Agreement's trade-related part came into force upon its signing and has been successfully implemented ever since 2008 in all its domains.

Nonetheless, political dialogue aimed at finding solutions for all open questions has continued so that the Agreement can come into force. That would enable the country to submit a credible application for European Union membership. We strongly believe that Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress along the European Union's enlargement path is also in the interests of all European Union member States. Therefore, serious and progressive engagement by the European Union is important to helping our country to facilitate the implementation of the necessary reforms on our path towards a European future. Such engagement would also be a constructive way of resolving the outstanding difficulties and fostering the dynamic of the integration process.

We are also making additional efforts necessary for completing the "5+2" agenda, which is obligation for the closure of the Office of the High Representative and for the resolution of all outstanding issues. The implementation of the *Sejdic-Finci* judgment of the European Court of Human Rights also remains to be addressed.

The International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia has played an important role in the prosecution of those responsible for serious violations of international law on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The Tribunal is supposed to serve as a constant reminder that there is no impunity for such serious crimes. We still insist on our common goal to investigate the crimes that were committed and to adequately prosecute the perpetrators of those crimes, regardless of their ethnicity. In that light, Bosnia and Herzegovina continues its constructive cooperation with the Tribunal. Considering that the Tribunal will soon complete its mandate, further processing of war crimes will have to be transferred to national judicial systems.

As regional cooperation also plays an important role, we are certain that the protocol on the exchange of evidence and information on war crimes, signed between the Offices of the Prosecutors of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia, will serve as an impetus towards strengthening communication and enhancing coordination among the Offices. My country remains dedicated to further promoting and increasing regional cooperation, which is in the common interest of the countries in the region.

The implementation of the existing human rights instruments, sustainable return and local integration of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) remains the priorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We continue good cooperation between partner countries in the framework of the Sarajevo process on refugees and IDPs, and see that the comprehensive and coordinated return of refugees and IDPs throughout the region is crucial to lasting peace.

Regarding the initiative launched by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the past year and renewed recently, on eventually declaring the termination of refugee status for the refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina, we believe that the UNHCR decision to terminate that status needs to be further discussed, especially bearing in mind the effect of such a decision on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such determination on the part of the UNHCR would most likely have an impact on the situation of those groups, for which the conditions to return to their pre-war homes have not been met. Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement guarantees to all refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as

internally displaced persons, the right to return to their pre-war homes.

The current figures from UNHCR provide strong evidence that the parties to annex VII have not yet created the conditions necessary for the voluntary return of refugees and IDPs to their pre-war homes. Therefore, we strongly believe that the proposed declaration of cessation of refugee status jeopardizes the realization of the objectives of the revised strategy for the implementation of annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement. For those reasons, I would like to inform the Council that my country does not support the decision to terminate refugee status in 2014, but insists that consideration of the cessation of refugee status be postponed until 2017, the time of the expected completion of the regional housing programme as well as other programmes currently under way.

We are aware that States bear the primary responsibility to respect and ensure the human rights of individuals within their territories. we are fully committed to addressing all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual violence in conflict. the protection of women in conflict situations and ending impunity remain our utmost priorities. we have a track record of definitive action to implement resolution 1325 (2000), and we were the first country in South-East Europe to develop a comprehensive national action plan for its implementation. With the aim of improving the overall situation of female victims of rape, we have made efforts to finalize the process of developing a second action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), which contains important provisions for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

This year, Bosnia and Herzegovina presented a candidate for the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). If elected, our candidate will place her priorities on prevention and on raising awareness of those most important issues. She will continue fighting prejudice and impunity. My country attaches great significance to its candidature and hopes thereby to advance the CEDAW agenda.

We are making additional efforts to resolve the remaining border and property issues with neighbouring countries. Regional cooperation and good-neighbourly relations form an essential part of Bosnia and Herzegovina's process of moving towards the European Union. We continue our active involvement in regional initiatives and have further developed our bilateral relations with other enlargement countries and neighbouring European Union member States. Regional cooperation is one of the foreign policy priorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entire region. It is an important element in the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and indicates the scope of my country's foreign policy. My country is committed and dedicated to the development of friendly relationships with its neighbours, to the processes of European integration, and to the resolution of outstanding issues in the European spirit.

In spite of the positive developments in the country, we are aware of the stand-off in the political process. It is necessary to develop a positive atmosphere that will foster constructive political dialogue leading towards the resolution of the outstanding issues. All changes in Bosnia and Herzegovina must be based on the rule of law. Therefore, the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement is imperative.

In conclusion, I would like to remind the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation that, in accordance with the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosniaks are one of the three constitutive peoples and that referring to them as Muslims is not in accordance with our Constitution.

The President: I now give the floor to the Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

Mr. Vrailas: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate country Montenegro and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

I join other speakers in welcoming High Representative Valentin Inzko back to the Council and would like to reassure him of our continued support.

Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to face challenges that arise largely from the lack of political will on the part of the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to look beyond their narrow ethnic and party interests and to work out compromises necessary to move the country forward in a number of areas of key importance. The country is increasingly lagging behind others in the western Balkans region, particularly as regards domestic, political and economic reforms and progress towards the European Union. The prolonged political stalemate and the absence of positive momentum in the domestic reform process lead to the further weakening of an already fragile economy and

put a heavy burden on the socioeconomic standing of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In February 2014, disillusioned citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina engaged in public protests, expressing their discontent with the deteriorating socioeconomic situation and with the inability of the country's political leaders to work out and implement relevant solutions. The protests that spread across the country should be seen as a wake-up call, rung by the Bosnians themselves to their political leaders and to the international community. We continue therefore to call on the leaders and politicians of Bosnia and Herzegovina to engage in dialogue with their citizens.

The lack of progress in implementing necessary political and economic reforms, the continued use of divisive rhetoric, and deeply rooted divisions among political parties continue to cause considerable headwinds for the efforts of those who want to see Bosnia and Herzegovina as a united, stable, viable, multi-ethnic and prosperous State, cooperating peacefully with its neighbours and irreversibly on track towards European Union membership. We therefore urge the country's political leadership to overcome its divisions and to undertake the reforms necessary to move the country forward in its EU integration process.

In light of necessary socioeconomic reforms and citizens' discontent, the European Union has now broadened its political dialogue with Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to place more emphasis on the socioeconomic and rule of law agenda. Over the past six months, the European Union has continued its strong engagement to anchor Bosnia and Herzegovina on the EU path. We believe that it is important that all of Bosnia and Herzegovina's obligations under the Interim Agreement on trade and trade-related matters be fulfilled as a matter of priority. The *Sejdic-Finci* ruling embodies the principle of ethnic non-discrimination, which is at the core of the values promoted by both the European Union and the United Nations. The implementation of the ruling remains a requirement for Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress towards the EU.

The EU Foreign Affairs Council discussed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 10 February. It expressed concern, but also noted that developments in the country showed a need for Bosnia and Herzegovina to keep the focus on the EU agenda, and for the European Union to broaden its political dialogue with the country. In April, the Foreign Affairs Council adopted conclusions that supported the broadening of the EU agenda and engagement towards the country. The Council reaffirmed the messages delivered by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton during her visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 12 March, urging political leaders to provide an immediate response to the grievances of the public, particularly as regards the socioeconomic agenda.

To facilitate this, the European Union, in coordination with key international financial institutions operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is putting forward an initiative called the Compact for Jobs and Growth, which aims at assisting the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to undertake key reforms in this regard. The initiative will be launched at the Forum for Prosperity and Jobs on 26 and 27 May in Sarajevo. It is of key importance that the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina engage constructively in these efforts.

Also, as announced by Commissioner Füle during his visit to Sarajevo on 17 February, the European Commission will further strengthen its efforts to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina to improve economic governance, to facilitate the country's capacities in absorbing EU pre-accession assistance, and to achieve progress in the fight against corruption. Some of the concrete initiatives in this regard were also further elaborated at a conference of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development on 24 February in London.

Beyond these challenges, which require immediate attention, it is becoming increasingly evident that the efficiency and functionality of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina in general need to be significantly improved, not only in order to build the capacities required in context of EU accession, particularly as regards the coordination among various levels of governance, but also to ensure the sustainability and continuity of democratic and social reforms undertaken since 1995. In this sense, the Council reaffirmed its determination to actively and intensively engage in support of this process, in close coordination and cooperation with its main international partners.

It is our expectation that the progress made by the rest of the region, and in particular the progress towards the normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, the accession negotiations with Montenegro and the steps undertaken by other countries in their EU accession processes, will stimulate renewed reform efforts, generate a sense of urgency among the country's leaders, and offer reassurance to its citizens.

The recent entry of Croatia into the European Union has made Bosnia and Herzegovina a direct neighbour of the EU, with a joint land border that is 1,000 kilometres long. This provides both the European Union and Bosnia and Herzegovina with the opportunity to additionally strengthen our mutual relationship and enhance cross-border cooperation. The role of neighbours cannot be overestimated — living by example, showing the positive effects of EU-related reforms, engaging positively and sending the right messages.

Since September 2011, the European Union has consolidated its presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and is fully engaged in supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina in all EU-related matters. Our EU Special Representative/Head of Delegation is also offering the EU Force Commander local political guidance.

The European Union continues to accompany Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress in the security field. The February events exposed a number of challenges in the area of law and order, particularly as regards cooperation, coordination and interoperability among various law enforcement agencies. The EU is already engaging in this regard, with its international partners, to assist the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in resolving these issues. EUFOR Althea remains primarily focused on capacity-building and training, while retaining the capability to contribute to the deterrence capacity of the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina if the situation so requires. The European Union will keep the operation under regular review, including on the basis of the situation on the ground, with a view to making progress in establishing conditions conducive to the delivery of its mandate.

The European Union, in line with the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of April, reaffirms its unequivocal commitment to the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign and united country. The European Union also reiterates its unequivocal commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU perspective. In this regard, it condemns as unacceptable secessionist and divisive rhetoric and ideas.

In the context of the overall EU strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina, we look forward to continuing discussions with the international community on the reconfiguration of the international presence, in the appropriate forum, and call on the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to meet the outstanding objectives and conditions for the closure of the Office of the High Representative. In this regard, the European Union reminds the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina of the need to fully cooperate with the Office of the High Representative and to provide the Office with the access necessary to officials, institutions and documents to carry out their mandate.

The European Union remains ready to provide the necessary assistance to boost the progress towards Bosnia and Herzegovina's European integration. It is this approach that will take the country forward on its reform agenda, towards stability and development, on its path to the European Union.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): I would like to join other speakers in welcoming High Representative Inzko and express our thanks for his briefing and report (S/2014/314). I would also like to extend our appreciation for the personal efforts he has been investing in carrying out his difficult mandate.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the observer of the European Union, but I would like to add several remarks in my national capacity.

The importance Croatia attaches to the territorial integrity, stability and functionality of Bosnia and Herzegovina is of the highest degree. We firmly believe that a stable and functional Bosnia and Herzegovina is essential for the stability and prosperity of South-East Europe and beyond. The Dayton Peace Agreement created a specific political system based primarily on ethnic representation, which rests on genuine equality between three constitutive peoples. This equality is a prerequisite for the stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

However, a complicated institutional set-up created by Dayton is often exploited by political elites, resulting in the present political and institutional stalemate. The protests in Sarajevo and other cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina earlier this year were a clear expression of citizens' frustration with the disfunctionality of the system and the deteriorating socioeconomic situation in the country. These events were a direct consequence of the lack of progressive steps taken by political elites and an indication that Bosnia and Herzegovina must embark on the reform processes in order to ensure stability and prosperity. Otherwise, the country might face further destabilization, including along ethnic lines.

We encourage the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to rise above their narrow ethnic interests in the upcoming election campaign. The citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina deserve a fresh perspective that incorporates the recognition and fulfilment of their social and economic needs.

We share the High Representative's concern and condemnation of those in Republika Srpska who continue to challenge the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The secessionist and divisive rhetoric by the President and other high officials of Republika Srpska is completely unacceptable.

In order to achieve our common goal — a stable, functioning and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina — we need to come up with a realistic strategy that takes into account the situation on the ground. The clear prospect of European Union membership constitutes beyond doubt the best stability and security framework within which Bosnia and Herzegovina can achieve steady progress. The European Union accession process serves as the best blueprint for State-building reforms, strengthened administrative capacities and good governance — all of which Bosnia and Herzegovina is in dire need of.

We encourage the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to find the necessary political will to implement the *Sejdic-Finci* ruling and to pursue other reforms, including those in the military sector.

Envisioning a tailor-made approach for Bosnia and Herzegovina's European integration process is essential. We should consider identifying concrete deliverables, beyond the *Sejdic-Finci* ruling, that would keep the country's integration process tangible and feasible. That should not mean lowering the criteria, but helping Bosnia and Herzegovina meet all of them. The fundamental logic of such an approach is in its conditionality. The pace and progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina's integration in the European Union should be directly linked to the pace and progress of its political, legal and administrative reforms, and every substantial bit of progress should be equally rewarded.

Croatia stresses the importance of the continuous high-level engagement on behalf of the European Union and the international community. At the same time, we expect to see the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina engage constructively in the recent initiatives by the European Commission, the European Union Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina and some member States, the aim of which is to give impetus to the European Union integration process, which is now lagging behind.

We support all initiatives aimed at improving economic and social cohesion, the active engagement of civil society and youth, and institution-building capacities and their functionality and efficiency.

Let me conclude by reiterating the readiness of Croatia, as the only European Union member State that directly borders Bosnia and Herzegovina, to continue to cooperate closely with our neighbour on all issues and to provide Bosnia and Herzegovina with strong and continuous political and technical support in the process of its European Union integration. We remain conscious of all the legitimate needs and rights of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They are the smallest of the three constituent people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but of course they remain equally important. We will continue to extend our support to them.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's troubled history is, at present, unfortunately often much more a source of tensions and disputes than the springboard for a better future. That is all the more reason to intensify our joint efforts in extending to Bosnia and Herzegovina all the support and assistance required.

On a positive note, just a few days ago, we witnessed the return of the famous Sarajevo City Hall to its old glory, after it was devastated during the siege of the city in the 1990s. The restoration of that iconic building, which is the symbol of Sarajevo, should be a harbinger of the better days that await that important European country.

Finally, on a much more informal note — and a positive one as well — I would like to wish Bosnia and Herzegovina every success in the upcoming World Cup in Brazil. That is a small but telling example of how Bosnia and Herzegovina can be successful on the world stage when it gets its act together.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia.

Mr. Milanović (Serbia): First of all, I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and thank him for his report to the Council (S/2014/314, annex).

Serbia considers Bosnia and Herzegovina one of its closest partners. As a guarantor of the Dayton Peace

Agreement, Serbia continues to be firmly committed to respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina and considers that all key decisions regarding the future of the country should be agreed among all its political actors. We support all agreements reached by the entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina aimed at promoting the well-being of all three constituent peoples.

Home to 1.5 million Serbs, Bosnia and Herzegovina is also our third-largest economic partner. Two days ago, the Prime Minister of Serbia, Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, made his first official visit abroad — to Sarajevo. Surely, that visit is a clear reflection of the importance that Serbia attaches to its relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and its entities and of my country's commitment to promoting those relations at the highest possible level and on the basis of good neighbourliness.

My country fully supports Bosnia and Herzegovina's European integration and the cooperation between the two countries within that process. In that context, we point out in particular the importance of the commission for the implementation of the action plan of the memorandum for cooperation in the field of European integration, the first meeting of which was held in Sarajevo on 5 June 2013, with the next one expected to take place in the first half of 2014.

We share the interest of Bosnia and Herzegovina in exchanging experiences on the fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria and its readiness for coordination on the road towards the European Union. We are ready to help Bosnia and Herzegovina on that road and share with it the experience gained with respect to the technical membership conditions that Serbia has fulfilled.

Serbia calls for an intensification of regional cooperation. It considers that a politically and economically stable region of South-East Europe is one of the basic preconditions for its own economic development. In particular, my country is interested in promoting cooperation within the Central Europe Free Trade Agreement, in signing in the coming period a memorandum of understanding on third markets and in the initiative by Bosnia and Herzegovina on the establishment of a consortium of Bosnian and Serbian companies after the signing of that memorandum.

In the field of economic cooperation, which is one of the most important components of bilateral cooperation, Serbia is interested in promoting business, investment, trade and military-economic cooperation. Of particular importance in that process is the role played by the Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation, the expected joint meeting of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the forthcoming visit of President Nikolić to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the meeting of the Interstate Border Commission. The resumption of the work of the Interstate Council for Cooperation would also be welcome.

In good faith and with a view to mutual interests, Serbia continues to cooperate with Bosnia and Herzegovina in addressing all outstanding issues, which are significantly reduced in number now, in direct contacts and talks without intermediaries. Those issues include demarcation, refugees and missing persons, and the process of succession.

We share the concern of High Representative Inzko regarding the recommendation by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to lift the refugee status of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region. Serbia has not accepted the recommendation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of 4 April 2014 because it has a negative effect on the protection of refugees and is detrimental to the implementation of the Regional Housing Programme and the process of reconciliation. Alongside with Bosnia and Herzegovina, we have continually pointed out that the recommendation is premature.

As the country with the largest number of refugees in the region, Serbia calls for the adoption of lasting, just and sustainable solutions that will address the needs and respect the rights of long-displaced vulnerable populations. In that context, in cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro, we have worked hard on addressing refugee issues and, in particular, implementing the Regional Housing Programme. We have invested every possible effort in reaching reconciliation and promoting development and stability in the region. To achieve these goals, my country will continue to support the overall development and progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.